not encourage further setting up of Central Universities keeping in view the restrictions contained in the National Policy on Education —1986, as amended in 1992.

Lowering of Fertilizer Prices

845. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the State Governments to lower the prices of fertilizers in view of the difficulties faced by the farmers due to rise in the prices of fertilizers;

(b) if so, the guidelines issued by Governments to the State Governments;

(c) the action initiated by the State Governments in the matter; and

(d) the steps taken to ensure timely supply of fertilizers to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) While enhancing the rates of concession for decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers in July, 1996, guidelines were issued to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to continue to negotiate and arrive at the prices most advantageous to the farmers after taking all relevant factors into account. Instructions were also subsequently issued to them to reduce the prices of decontrolled fertilizers and pass on the benefit of concession in full to the farmers.

(c) Some of the State Governments have negotiated and announced the Maximum Retail Prices for current Rabi season.

(d) The supply position of Urea during the current Rabi season is satisfactory. Periodic monitoring is done to make available maximum quantity of decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers to the farmers.

Allotment of Forest land in Sabramala Town in Kerala

846. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request for grant of permission for allotment of forest land in Sabramala town in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala for providing basic necessities to a large number of pilgrims visiting the town;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon; and

(c) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) to (c) The State Government of Kerala had earlier submitted a proposal under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 115.60 hectares of forest land in district Pathanamthitta for providing amenities to piligrims of Sabarimala Temple. The proposed forest area formed part of Periyar Tiger Reserve. While the proposal was under process, the State Government in December, 1995 forewarded another proposal involving 20 hectares of forest land for the same purpose. The proposal was examined by the Ministry and also discussed with Nodal Officer, State Forest Department, Kerala, in May, 1996. As per the discussion held with the Nodal Officer, certain suggestions were made for the consideration of the Kerala State Government which include preparation of a master plan for the area already in possession of Travancore Devaswom Board in the main premises of temple to replace dilapidated structures with multi-storey structures and to explore the possiblity of creating parking facilities at Plappalli, Nilackal and Rajanpara areas which have already been brough under plantation to avoid clearing of pristine natural forests in presently proposed Chakkayam area. In the absence of complete details from the State Government, the question of taking a final decision on the proposal does not arise.

Plan for Agricultural Research

847. PROF. RAM KAPSE:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan for agricultural research during the next twenty-five years and devise a system for raising own resource;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and